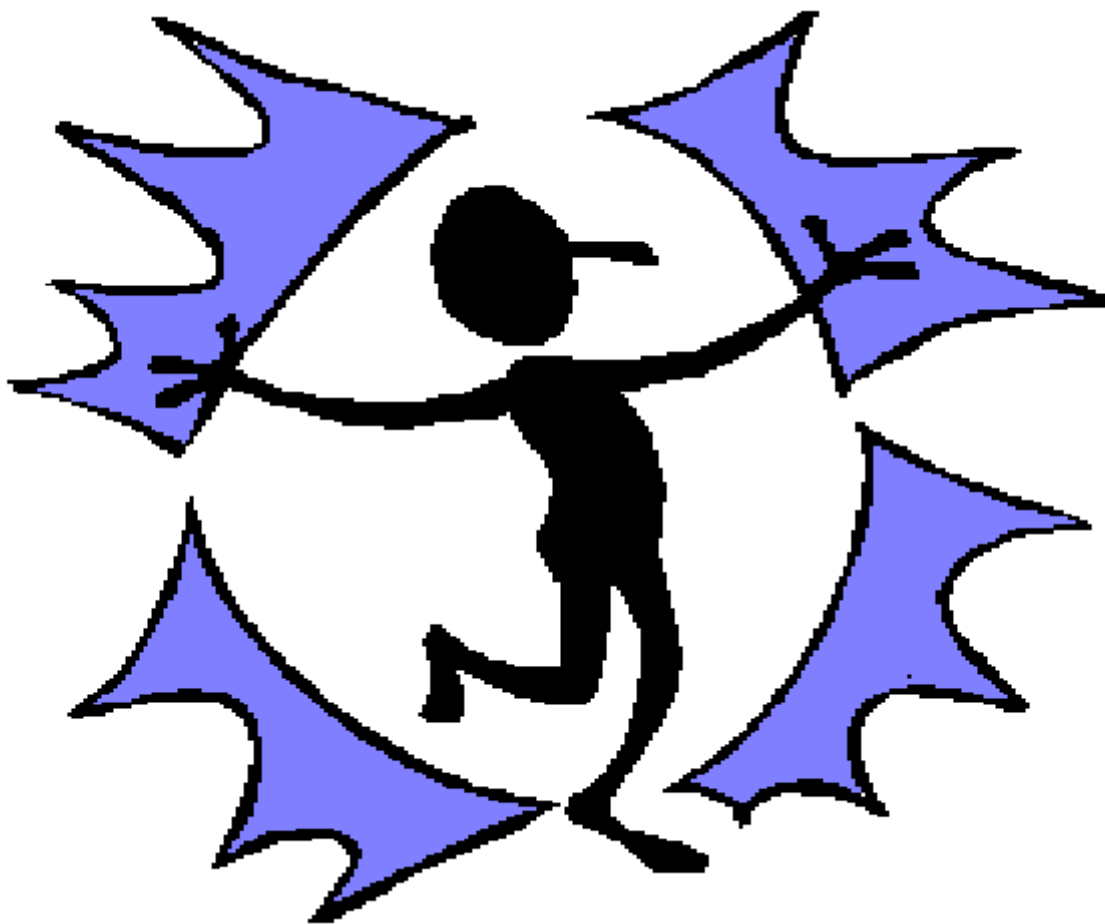




Inside Edition



*Montana
Job Hunter's Guide*



State of Montana
Marc Racicot, Governor

Montana Department of Labor & Industry
Pat Haffey, Commissioner

Prepared by the
Montana State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
Office of Research & Analysis
Bob Rafferty, Director

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Credit will be appreciated where appropriate.

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Introduction



This handbook is designed to help adult and youthful ex-offenders find employment in Montana. It was prepared by the Montana Department of Labor & Industry to answer some of your questions and to highlight some programs that may help you. While we don't expect you'll find the answers to all the questions you may have, we hope this is a good starting point for your job search.



Don't Like to Read. . .

At least read this page!

Getting a job is not easy. You can find a job faster if you will do a few simple things:

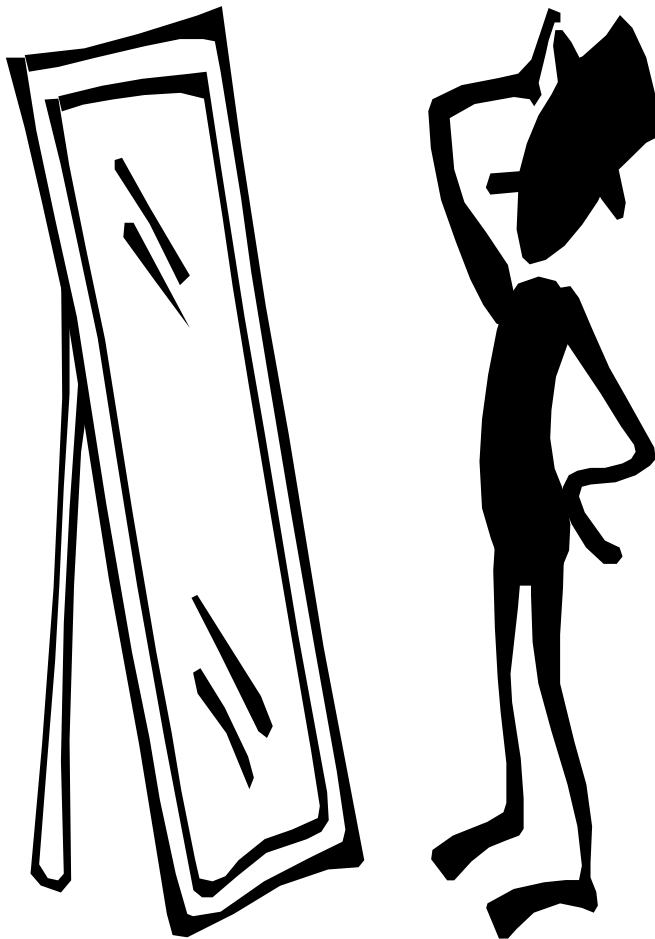
- ☺ **Apply for several jobs** - Improve your odds.
- ☺ **Be on time** for appointments.
- ☺ **Go alone to the interview** - No friends or relatives.
- ☺ **Shower** and wear **clean clothes**. - Look like you are ready to work. Dress like other workers.
- ☺ **Tattoos** - If you have tattoos, **cover them up**.
- ☺ **Tell the truth** about your record *if asked*.
- ☺ Assemble the job application information in the center of this booklet and **keep it with you**.
- ☺ **Get help on job applications** - family, friends, Job Service staff, counselors, etc.
- ☺ Take your Social Security Card and other **important papers with you**.

Ask for the job!

Putting Your Past Behind You

FIRST IMPRESSIONS - Employers try to hire people they feel can be depended on to do a job and fit in with other employees. One of the most difficult parts of job hunting you may face is convincing employers you are reliable and can get along with others.

Some people will base part of their opinion of you on your appearance. As much as possible, you want to appear to fit in. Start by not looking like a stereotypical ex-felon. If you have tattoos, try to avoid making them obvious. You have a better chance of being hired if you dress and groom yourself like employees of the company you wish to work for. It is also very important to be on time for job interviews.



- **Dress Appropriately**
- **Be enthusiastic**
- **SMILE**
- **Direct Eye Contact**
- **Sell Yourself!**

Practice makes perfect...



Think Positive!

Employers value an employee with a **positive work attitude**. According to employers, promising employees are those who are enthusiastic, friendly, motivated, and willing to accept tasks pleasantly. Put yourself in a positive frame of mind before you meet with an employer. Figure out a way to turn your weaknesses into strengths!

Attitude - The way you approach your work and your coworkers can affect how you feel about your work and yourself. A **positive attitude** can make your work more enjoyable. Pleasant people generally make other people feel good.

Respect - Treat other people like you want them to treat you. Remember you have to earn respect from others. It is **not automatically given**. When you are working, make sure that good ideas are credited to the people who created them. If you make a mistake, admit it.





Tips for Working with Others

Tip

Benefit

Do a good job

You will feel positive. Others will respect you.

Make a good first impression

First impressions last for a long time in people's minds. If you make a good impression, people will think positively about you and want to work with you.

Respect others

People will respond by respecting you. You will feel good about yourself.

Keep a positive attitude

Time will pass more pleasantly. People will be more positive towards you.

Admit your mistakes

You will learn more and be better at your job. Others will respect you.

Let people know whose idea it was

If you give credit where it is due, others will do the same for you and your good ideas.

Use appropriate language

People will use appropriate language around you. You will feel better about yourself and your coworkers.

BE POSITIVE
Keep trying - you will find a job.



Your Job Search

Job hunting is a full-time job, and you should try to spend at least six hours a day actively looking for a job. If you work at your job search as hard as you would work at a job, you will eventually see **positive results**. Take a good hard look at yourself and your skills.

Start by asking yourself what are your job skills and who can use those skills?

Think about all the jobs you've had before and any hobbies or training you may have.

Next, ask yourself who can use what you can offer?



To do this, you should do some research into the needs of potential employers. The more you know about an employer, the better you can match your skills to their needs. Try to learn about the products they make or sell, and most important -- who makes hiring decisions. Many companies have personnel directors who can screen applicants, but generally, managers decide who is actually hired. Research every company you plan to interview with.

Consider enlisting the support of your family, relatives, friends and neighbors in your efforts. Studies have shown that they are an excellent source for job leads. One great thing about using this source is that frequently they know about job vacancies long before anyone else, so it is possible to be hired without having to compete with other job applicants. Additionally, friends and family can give you good inside information about potential employers.

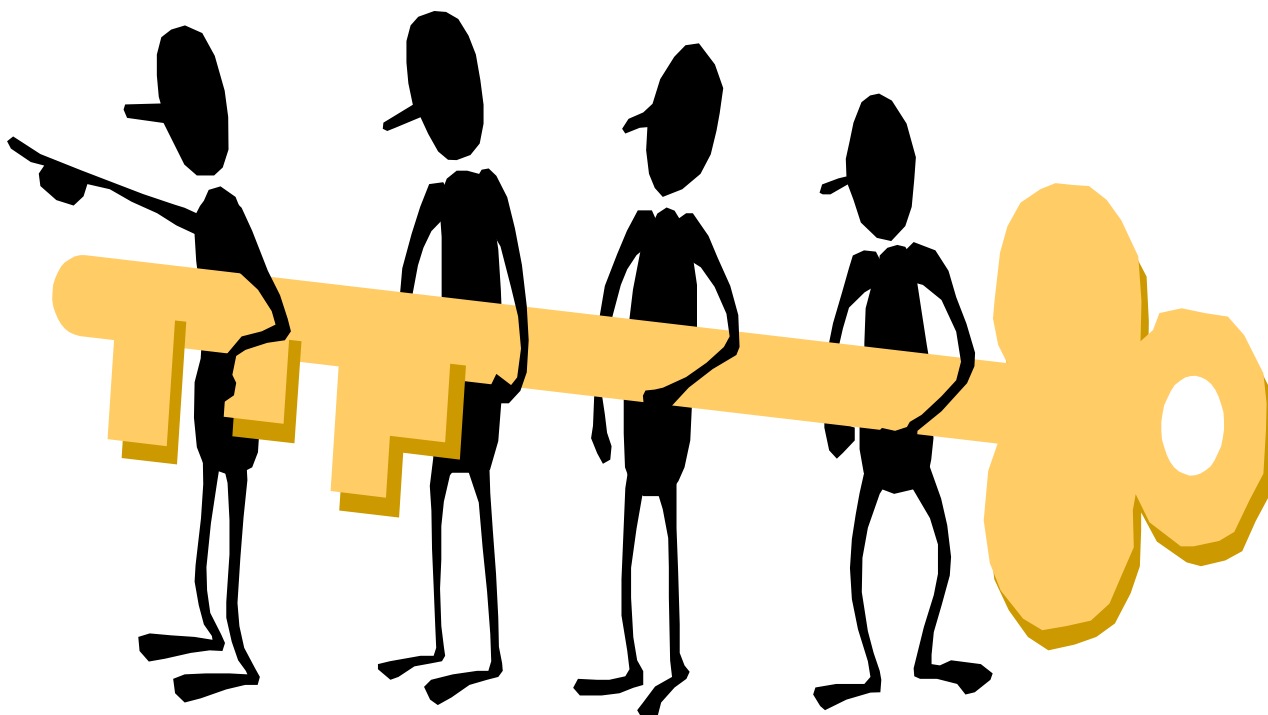
**Remember, to be a successful job hunter,
all you are really looking for is just one person to say
yes .**



When you arrive at the Job Service Center be PREPARED - treat this like a job interview. Expect to fill out a job application or registration form. Bring with you your current address, phone number or message number, and employer names, addresses, phone numbers and dates of previous employment.

Remember the consultants at the Job Service Center are there to help you, but you have to help them by being able to provide information about yourself and your employment history. The consultants will be interviewing you to determine if you meet the requirements for a myriad of jobs as qualifications have been outlined by the employers.

Based upon your interview and qualifications the Job Service consultant may determine whether or not the employer will see you or consider your application or resume. Depending on the availability of positions, you may be sent on a job interview directly from the Job Service Center. Dress appropriately for the jobs you are seeking.





Upon your arrival at the Job Service Center, check in at the information desk. You will be scheduled to see an Employment Consultant. This person will explain the services offered and assess how they may be able to help you with your career search. These services could include job placement, testing to determine your skills and aptitudes, counseling, and job training to name a few. You can find listings for jobs with private or government employers at the Job Service Center, as well as additional information about how to apply.

The Job Service consultants can assist you with basic information about unemployment insurance. You will be given instructions on which Unemployment Telephone Claims Center to call and their telephone number based upon where you live. Specific information about your claim and Unemployment Insurance information can be obtained from the customer service representatives at the telephone claims center. (To qualify for Unemployment Insurance you must meet the criteria as outlined in the Unemployment Insurance laws, rules and regulations.)

Montana's Job Service Centers also offer use of the Montana Career Information System and Job Works. These are computer programs that can assist you with your job search and help you prepare your cover letter and resume. The Montana Career Information System includes a skills assessment and information about schools, financial aid, military service, and self-employment.

Check out the help-wanted ads in the newspaper. From time to time, you will find some good jobs advertised there. **Use every option you have.** The more positions you apply for the quicker you will find employment. **Knock on doors.** The most effective method for finding a job is to apply directly to the employer you wish to work for. Try to arrange an interview with the decision maker who could hire you. Plan your presentation carefully and remember, thank you letters are an important follow-up for each interview.

The U.S. Department of Labor produces an excellent booklet for job seekers. **Tips For Finding the Right Job** has how-to information on planning your job search, cover letters, resumes, testing, interviews and more. This 20-page booklet and the Montana Department of Labor's **Montana Career Guide** are available free from the Montana Department of Labor. The **Montana Career Guide** provides occupational information such as occupational outlook, wages, and employment for over 330 occupations.

Keep trying! If one method doesn't seem to work for you, try another. If you thought your interview went really well and you did not get the job, you might consider contacting the interviewer and asking if there was a particular area during the interview where you could make improvements.

Using Labor Market Information

Useful information is available at no cost from the Montana Department of Labor & Industry. Write to the address listed on the bottom of this page and they will send you any of these booklets.

Montana Career Guide: Discover Your Future Frontier. A newspaper-type publication designed for high school seniors and graduates. This publication provides information about colleges and universities, financial aid for school, occupational outlook and wages, and a variety of career planning information.

Statistics in Brief - A pocket sized reference that includes data on employment and unemployment by county and labor force and service delivery areas. This pamphlet also reflects information on employment by selected industries; hours and earnings; new business firms; the national consumer price index; and unemployment insurance claims, benefits, and trust fund balances.

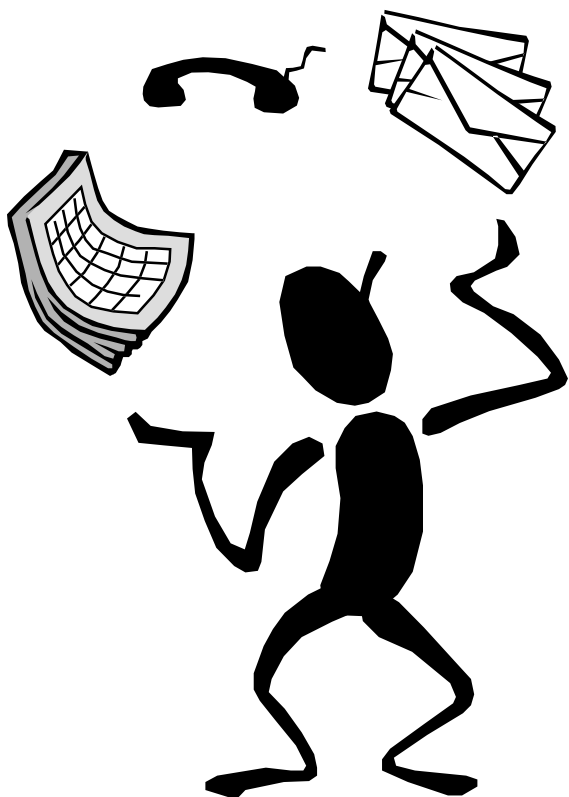
Wage Information - Statewide private sector information summarizes hourly pay by such categories as middle range and weighted average at experienced and entry levels. This also includes information about skill levels and education required to qualify for entry-level jobs.

Job Projections - Information on where jobs are and where they will likely be in the future. This is based partly on past employment trends and the likelihood those trends will continue.

Montana Career Information System - Available at all Job Service Centers. Explore over 330 occupations, 1,200 scholarship sources, and 3,500 postsecondary schools. Contains extensive job search information, including Job Works, to create a resume online.

On the Internet - <http://rad.dli.state.mt.us>
or <http://mcis.dli.state.mt.us>

Department of Labor and Industry
Office of Research & Analysis
PO Box 1728
Helena Montana 59624-1728
800-354-8830

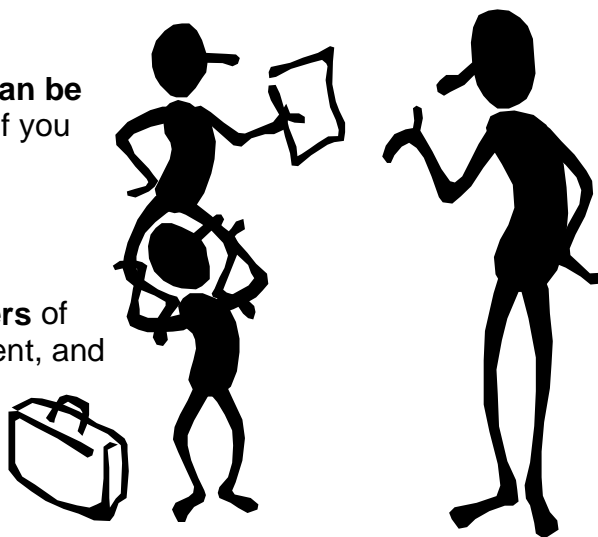


Job Application Forms

Most employers will ask you to complete an application form. These forms are a critical part of the job search process because employers use them to choose people for interviews. Employers often complain that applicants do not properly complete application forms.

Have the following information with you:

- **address and phone number where you can be contacted** - message number is important if you do not have your own phone
- **social security number**
- **names, addresses and telephone numbers** of previous employers with dates of employment, and starting and ending wages
- **list of school subjects** which may help you qualify for the position
- names, addresses and telephone numbers for at least **three references** - ask each individual for permission to use them as a reference
- driver's license number, union cards, copies of transcripts, military discharge papers and **other relevant information**.



Try to look like employees of the company you wish to work for. The worst that can happen is that you won't get *this* job. **Emphasize** that the past is behind you.

Take all of the above information with you when you go to fill out an employer's application form. Keeping this information up to date and with you during your career search, will save you a lot of time and show excellent organizational skills.

Persistence pays - keep trying and you'll be hired.



Tips For Completing Application Forms



Read and follow all directions carefully.

Review the whole form before starting.



Ask questions if you are unsure about anything on the form.



Neatly print the information requested in black or blue ink, or if given the opportunity to return the form, have the information typed.



Check spelling and grammar.



Do not leave any blank spaces.

If an item does not apply to you indicate "none," "not applicable," or "N/A" in the blank provided.



Be honest, don't stretch your qualifications.

Most applications require your signature declaring that the information you have provided is accurate. Applications are frequently verified and **lying on a job application form is usually grounds for dismissal.**



Be reasonable if asked to provide your salary expectations.



The Job Interview

The interview is your opportunity to personally convince the employer **you are the best person for the job**.

Remember to volunteer information about law violations only when you are asked. If you have large gaps in employment because of imprisonment, it is best to deal with these gaps **honestly**.

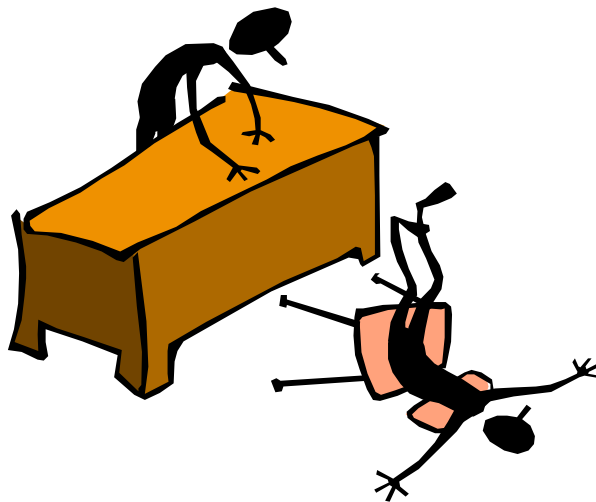
Be prepared to be turned down many times before receiving an offer. Even when you are not chosen, **remain polite** and ask that they keep you in mind for any future openings. It's possible the person they choose will turn the position down, or after a short time just won't work out.

So always keep the door open, and **remember that persistence pays**. If you feel that you would really like to work for an employer, check back with them from time to time.

As much as possible, **present negative information in a positive manner**.

Stress, that you have made the best of your situation and that you have a good attitude about your experience.

A good attitude is important for any job hunter, but it is particularly important for a person with a history of problems with the law. Tell them you are willing to work hard. Try to convey confidence and enthusiasm. If you are nervous, take a deep breath and figure the worst that can happen is you just won't get **this** job.



Be polite, let the interviewer know that you really do want the job!

Interview Questions

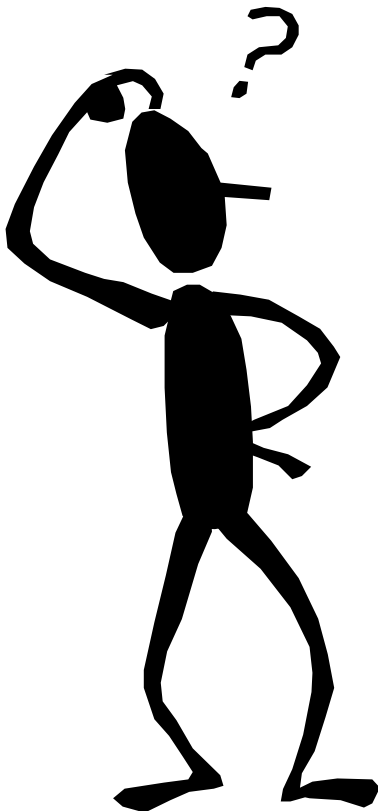
Try to anticipate the types of questions the interviewer might ask you and think about your answers. If the subject of your record comes up, do not go into great detail or use legal terms to describe any offenses. Stress what you have learned from your experiences and that you have changed. A possible response to a question about prison time might be:

Yes, I spent some time at the _____ correctional facility. I was young, and I did some dumb things that I regret now. I did a lot of growing up in prison. I met some people who helped me a lot and received some good job training there. While I never want to go back, it was a good learning experience for me.

If you don't know an answer, be honest and just say so. Also think about questions you might like to ask the interviewer. Learn as much as possible about the company before you interview and know what kind of position you are seeking.

After each interview, analyze what you did right and wrong so you can improve in the future. The more you interview the more comfortable you will be with each successive interview. **Send the interviewer a short thank you note immediately after the interview.**

Other typical questions may be something like:



"What are your strengths/weaknesses?"

"What are your long range career goals?"

"Why are you interested in working for this company?"

Sample interview questions and answers can be found in the Job WORKS program at your local Job Service Center.

Pre-Employment Testing

The application process may also require that the applicant complete a test or a series of tests. Testing will often provide the employer with information about your aptitudes, interests and personality.

Some companies may test for general technical knowledge or proficiency in a particular area such as typing or math. Test results are usually one of the numerous qualifying factors in the evaluation of your job application.



Drug Screening

Many employers are concerned about the effects of illicit drug use on safety, productivity and related issues. As a matter of policy, some companies test job applicants and current employees for drug use. Some application forms will include statements, information, or questions about alcohol and drug use. Applicants are often advised during the interview process that drug screening is required but some employers offer no information about drug testing in advance. Refusal to submit to a drug test may be used by the employer as grounds to reject your application. You may be asked to pay for your drug testing.



Tips for Keeping Your Job

Congratulations!

Now that you have a job - hang on to it.

Your employer expects you to:

- ☺ **Be on time - every day.**
- ☺ Display a **positive** and **cooperative attitude**.
- ☺ Do the extra things - **give 110%**.
- ☺ Be **flexible**, work with your employer if situations change.
- ☺ **Work at work** - leave your personal life at home.
- ☺ Use your sick leave only when you are **really sick**.
- ☺ Keep learning, **look for opportunities** to advance yourself.
- ☺ If you will be late or miss work, **call your employer**.
- ☺ Wear the **proper clothing** – if you don't know, ask!
- ☺ **Ask questions** - if you don't understand something, ask for a better explanation.



**Remember there are a lot of people
who want you to succeed!**

Special Programs for Ex-Offenders

Employers who hire ex-offenders may qualify for incentives offered by the federal government under The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 known as **WOTC - Work Opportunity Tax Credits** program. They join other initiatives and targeted tax credits that help American workers gain economic self-sufficiency and increase American productivity and economic growth.

Employers must apply for and receive certification from their state employment agency that their new hire belongs to one of the nine groups of job seekers eligible for the WOTC before claiming it on their federal income tax return. **One of the targeted groups is - Low income ex-felons.** For more information you can

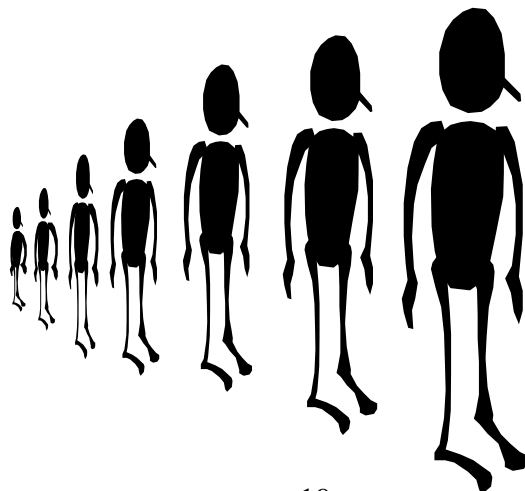
visit the WOTC web site:

<http://www.doleta.gov/wotc.htm> OR, call (202) 219-9092

The **Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)** provides training programs funded by the federal government. Eligibility is based on guidelines established by each of the funding sources. There are programs available for youth and adults. Individuals must meet income guidelines and have other barriers to employment.

The goals of these training programs are to assist applicants in obtaining services and skills needed to secure full-time, permanent work. Job specific skills may be taught in a classroom (vo-tech) or trade school or on-the-job training, working with an employer at the job site. Expenses for training can be paid by the job training programs.

You can find out more about the programs listed here from your case worker or from the Department of Labor & Industry, Job Service Center consultants. You might also check with community social service agencies. The Salvation Army in particular has been very helpful to many ex-offenders.





Career Goals

Many people, when completing school, think they are finished with education. Learning takes place constantly, even though we may not be aware of it at the time it happens. Every time you master a new task, you have learned something new.

The relationship companies have with employees is different now than it was even 20 years ago. Companies no longer are as committed to helping you develop the skills necessary for advancement. You should think of yourself as working for “My Career, Inc.”. You need to ensure your product, that is, **you**, has the best competitive advantages available.

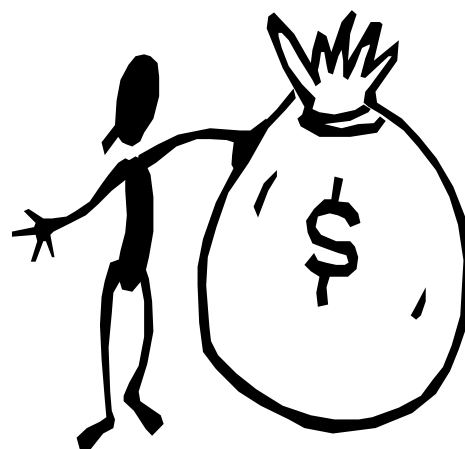
You need to make training and career goals for yourself! It is good to have an idea about what you want to be doing in one year, in five years, in ten years, in twenty years. This is called a career plan or path. There are three main parts: understanding what skills, abilities, and experiences you have (the present); what skills, abilities, and experiences you would like to have (the future); and what you need to do to obtain those skills, abilities, and experiences (the plan or goals).

The Present - You can use any of several books to help you identify what skills you have. What you may want to do is write a “super” resume with very detailed descriptions of every job you have held throughout your life. These jobs can be paid jobs, volunteer jobs, or activities at home. List all the skills needed for these jobs. Mark which jobs and skills you like the best with a highlighter or pen. **Remember** this “super” resume is for you alone. This resume does not have to follow any particular format. You just have to understand everything you put down. Make sure you include all of your skills. It is easy to overlook things you take for granted.

The Future - Look at the “super” resume you have completed. You marked the activities and skills you like the best. Now use another color highlighter or pen to mark those skills you **would like to improve**. Write down titles of jobs you would like to hold. Sometimes these jobs will use the skills and experiences you already have. Sometimes these jobs will use skills and abilities that you do not currently hold. Be honest with yourself on what skills you do have and how well you can do them.



The Plan - You marked the jobs and skills you liked the best. You also marked those skills you want to improve and jobs you are interested in. Now, you need to make a plan that will take you from the skills and experiences you already hold to the **job you want**. You **can** learn these skills at colleges, at private training providers, on your current job, from your current employer and/or from your supervisor and coworkers.



Example:

(Do this for each position held)

Name:

Job Held: (Position Title)

Employer:

Dates:

Supervisor:

Duty:

Like:

Dislike:

Duty:

Like:

Dislike:

Duty:

Like:

Dislike:

Why I took this job:

What I liked the most:

What I liked the least:

Why I left this job:

Another tool you may want to consider is the **Montana Prospector's Portfolio**. This workbook is available at your local Job Service Center or Workforce Center; it can also be downloaded from our web site at: mcis.dli.state.mt.us This workbook contains the outline of the process for career development--the steps you take to make career decisions and develop plans for new career directions. It is also a place to store information about yourself. Your portfolio should contain information regarding career options, making decisions and plans, writing resumes and preparing for interviews. The portfolio is your on-going creative work. You can add information, new options, and new ideas as you change and grow. Keeping your portfolio up-to-date will help you as you face new challenges.

EXPLORE ALL YOUR OPTIONS!



But where do I get the training I need?

So far you have looked at the skills you now hold and the skills you need to improve or obtain. Now you need to decide where to get the training. Some skills need objective assessment from approved sources (like a degree, certificate, or grade from an existing school). The time it takes, as well as any money you spend, should be taken into consideration when deciding where to pursue your training.

Depending on its size, some companies may have their own training department. Many times, companies have regular training workshops scheduled for tasks common to many jobs, or for specialized tasks in jobs that have many employees. Your employment record will show you attended this training. Companies value training that is tailored specifically to its needs. You will also have a chance to interact with other people who are trying to learn the same skills as you are. This is a wonderful time to pick up tips not only from the workshop leader, but also from the other workshop participants.

Many high schools, community colleges, and universities, as well as other providers offer courses that can help you learn more skills for your job. Continuing education courses are often scheduled in the evenings or on weekends. Many computer equipment and supply stores offer computer software courses. Make sure the outside source you choose to provide you with new skills is legitimate and accredited. Going to school is not only an investment of your time, but also your money. Make sure you will get value for the efforts you are making.

Remember that any training depends on your attitude. Be open to learning and you can surprise yourself with the new skills and abilities you obtain. Remember the teacher, as well as your classmates, can also be resources for you. Ask them questions and listen to their answers.

Montana Career Information System - available at all Job Service Centers, can be used in many ways.

- Look up the occupations you want to explore and find out the skills needed and the programs of study related to each occupation.
- Find a list of the schools and training providers in your state offering that particular training.



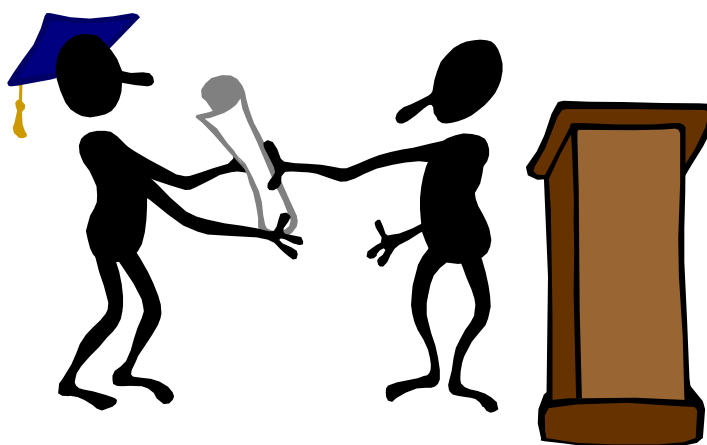
- Use the School Sort to develop a list of two and four year colleges that offer training in the program of study you want.
- Use the Occupation Sort component to find a list of occupations that match your preferred work setting and needs.

You can explore training opportunities on the Internet. Some colleges are experimenting with learning on-line. In addition, a search on the Internet may assist you in finding providers of training, both on-line and at their own campuses.

There are many self-help books that can be explored at your local library, a college library, or local bookstores. You can order books through the Internet, as well. If there are several books that are written on your topic, pick the right one for you by looking at how it is organized (the table of contents). Then pick random pages throughout the book and read them. Select the book that seems the most understandable to you.

If you do not need official proof you have learned a new skill, you can learn skills from your coworkers. Make sure you let them know you want to learn the skill from them. This way they will be more instructive and willing to help you.

Many times, membership groups or professional and trade associations will offer training. The offerings are provided at regular or special meetings or at larger conventions. If you belong to such an association through your work or through your own initiative, take advantage of any training which they may offer. These workshops offer introductions to cutting edge technology, new products, and innovative practices.



If you are afraid to fail, you will never succeed!



Location of Job Service Centers

Most major towns in Montana have state Department of Labor and Industry Job Service Centers. These service centers provide employment opportunities and offer a myriad of services to the public. Montana Department of Labor and Industry Job Service Centers are listed below.

Location & Phone:

Anaconda Job Service

307 East Park
Anaconda, MT 59711
(406) 563-3444

Bitterroot Job Service

333 West Main Street
Hamilton, MT 59840
(406) 363-1822

Butte Job Service

2201 White Blvd.
PO Box 3528
Butte, MT 59702
(406) 494-0300

Dillon Job Service

730 North Montana
PO Box 1300
Dillon, MT 59725
(406) 683-4259

Glasgow Job Service

238 2nd Avenue South
Glasgow, MT 59230
(406) 228-9369

Great Falls Job Service

1018 7th Street South
Great Falls, MT 59405
(406) 791-5800
(406) 791-5882 TDD

Billings Job Service

2121-B Rosebud Drive
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 652-3080

Bozeman Job Service

121 North Willson
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-9200

Cut Bank Job Service

1210 East Main
Cut Bank, MT 59427
(406) 873-2191

Flathead Job Service

427 First Avenue East
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 758-6200
(406) 758-6224 TDD

Glendive Job Service

211 South Kendrick
Glendive, MT 59330
(406) 365-3314

Havre Job Service

416 First Street
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-5847

**Helena Job Service**

715 Front Street
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 447-3200

Libby Job Service

417 Mineral, Suite 4
Libby, MT 59923
(406) 293-6282

Miles City Job Service

12 North 10th Street
PO Box 1786
Miles City, MT 59301
(406) 232-8340

Polson Job Service

417-B Main Street
P.O. Box 970
Polson, MT 59860
(406) 883-5261

Sidney Job Service

211 North Central
Sidney, MT 59270
(406) 482-1204

Wolf Point Job Service

217 3rd Avenue South
Wolf Point, MT 59201
(406) 653-1720

Lewistown Job Service

300 First Avenue North
Lewistown, MT 59457
(406) 538-8701

Livingston Job Service

228 South Main
P.O. Box 1199
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-0520

Missoula Job Service

539 S. 3rd Street West
P.O. Box 5027
Missoula, MT 59806
(406) 728-7060, 542-5740

Shelby Job Service

402 First Street South
Shelby, MT 59474
(406) 434-5161

Thompson Falls Job Service

608 Main Street
P.O. Box 669
Thompson Falls, MT 59873
(406) 827-3472



Some good reads!

How to Get a Good Job and Keep It

by Deborah Perlmutter Block, Ph.D.

Joyce Lain Kennedy's Career Book

by Joyce Lain Kennedy and Dr. Darryl Laramore

Job Savvy: How to Be a Success at Work

by La Verne Ludden, Ed.D.

First-Job Survival Guide

by Andrea J. Sutcliffe

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting the Job You Want

by Marc Dorio

The PIE Method for Career Success

by Daniel Porot

The 1997 What Color Is Your Parachute?

by Richard Nelson Bolles

New New Quick Job-Hunting Map

by Richard Nelson Bolles

Where Do I Go From Here With My Life?

by John C. Crystal and Richard Nelson Bolles

Time for a Change

by Kent Banning and Ardelle Friday

**Career Change Everything You Need to Know to Meet New Challenges
and Take Control of Your Career**

by David Helfand

Interview for Success

by Caryl Raie Krannich and Ronald L. Krannich, Ph.D.s

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